

Judges 6:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

Analysis

Gideon recognizes he has seen the Angel of the LORD face to face and fears death: 'Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.' This terror reflects the consistent biblical teaching that sinful humans cannot see God and live (Exodus 33:20, Judges 13:22, Isaiah 6:5). The exclamation 'Alas!' (ahai, אַהִי) expresses profound distress. Gideon's fear demonstrates growing theological awareness—he now understands the magnitude of his encounter. This crisis moment parallels Isaiah's temple vision ('Woe is me! for I am undone') and Peter's confession ('Depart from me; for I am a sinful man').

Historical Context

The belief that seeing God resulted in death pervaded Israelite theology based on God's holiness and human sinfulness. Previous encounters with the Angel of the LORD by Hagar (Genesis 16:13), Jacob (Genesis 32:30), and Moses (Exodus 3:6) all produced similar shock at surviving divine encounter. This theological understanding undergirded the high priest's annual entrance into the Holy of Holies with trepidation and elaborate preparation (Leviticus 16).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Gideon's fear upon recognizing God's presence reveal the seriousness of divine holiness?
2. What does humanity's inability to see God and live teach about the necessity of Christ as mediator?
3. How should awareness of God's holiness affect our approach to worship and prayer?

Interlinear Text

רָא יִתִּי	גִּדְעוֹן	כִּי	מַלְאֲכִי	יְהוָה	וְאֵל	וַיֹּאמֶר	
I have seen	And when Gideon	H3588	an angel	of the LORD	H1931	said	
H7200	H1439		H4397	H3068		H559	
גִּדְעוֹן	אֲהָה	אֲדֹנָי	יְהוָה	כִּי	עַל	כִּי	רָא יִתִּי
And when Gideon	Alas	O Lord	GOD	H3588	H5921	for because	I have seen
H1439	H162	H136	H3069			H3651	H7200
מַלְאֲכִי	יְהוָה	פָּנִים:	אֶל	פָּנִים:			
an angel	of the LORD	face	H413	face			
H4397	H3068	H6440		H6440			

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 33:20 (Parallel theme): And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

Genesis 32:30 (References God): And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Deuteronomy 5:26 (References God): For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

